

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE FISCAL YEAR 1998 DEFENSE BUDGET AND THE MILITARY SERVICES' UNFUNDED PRIORITY LISTS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, during the consideration of the annual defense budget in each of the last several years, the Armed Services Committee has asked each of the military services to provide a list of unfunded priorities—that is, programs that were not included in the defense budget request submitted to the Congress. For obvious and very understandable reasons, the military services have responded to these requests with a great deal of enthusiasm.

Again this year, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator THURMOND, asked each of the military service chiefs to indicate to the committee how they would allocate up to \$3.0 billion in additional funds above the fiscal year 1998 budget request. Last month each of the four service chiefs provided the committee with a list of \$3.0 billion for specific programs not funded in the budget request.

Mr. President, the Armed Services Committee needs to hear the priorities of the military services—but we also have a responsibility to view these priorities in a broader context. The so-called unfunded priority lists submitted to the committee reflect only individual service priorities. They do not necessarily reflect the joint service priorities of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs or the warfighting commanders in chief.

General Shalikashvili made this point earlier this year to the committee when he said during our February 12 hearing in reference to these unfunded priority lists:

I would put in as strong a plea as I can that you then ask what the overall prioritization is within the joint context, because we are talking of a joint fight. And so to understand why one system should be put forward versus another, you really ought to see what the joint priority on it is, and how that particular system, in the eyes of the joint warfighter, then contributes to the overall fight. Obviously then you will make a judgment. But I would ask that you do not look at service lists without putting it in the

context of a joint view on the importance of that item or the other.

Mr. President, one of the driving forces behind the Armed Services Committee's work on the landmark Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act 10 years ago—which our former colleague and now Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen played a key role in—was the need to enhance the joint perspective within the Defense Department. I agree very strongly with General Shalikashvili's view that the Armed Services Committee—and the Senate—should have the benefit of the joint perspective before we take any action on any of the items on the military services' unfunded priority lists. We have a responsibility to ensure that the programs we fund make the greatest possible contribution to the joint warfighting capability of our Armed Forces.

For this reason, when the committee received the four unfunded priority lists from the military service chiefs last month totaling \$12.0 billion, I sent all four lists over to Secretary Cohen and General Shalikashvili and asked two questions.

First, I asked which of the specific programs on the military services unfunded priority lists, if any, were programs for which funds are not included in the Defense Department's current Future Years Defense Program.

Second, I asked for Secretary Cohen's and General Shalikashvili's views on the individual programs on the services' lists from a joint warfighting perspective, and whether there were any programs not included in these lists that in their view had a higher priority from the joint perspective.

Mr. President, I recently received letters from both Secretary Cohen and General Shalikashvili in response to my letter. I ask unanimous consent that my letter and their responses be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. (See exhibit 1.)

Mr. LEVIN. Secretary Cohen indicates in his letter that while the military services' unfunded priority lists "provide useful ways that the Defense Department could apply additional funds, the President's budget already provided for the Department's essential priorities." With the exception of four specific items, Secretary Cohen also noted that the items on the services' lists are included in the fiscal year 1998-fiscal year 2003 Future Years Defense Program.

General Shalikashvili's response to my letter outlines his views on the most important programs on the services' lists from a joint warfighting perspective. General Shalikashvili's joint list totals about \$4.0 billion, or about one-third of the total \$12 billion on the four lists that the service chiefs submitted. His list includes three command, control, communications and intelligence programs that were not on

the services' original list. Unfortunately, General Shalikashvili does not indicate relative priorities within the programs on his joint list, but I intend to pursue this question further.

Mr. President, I think Secretary Cohen's and General Shalikashvili's personal involvement in this issue of unfunded priority lists represents an important step forward in what some people have called the wish list process in the last several years—a process that in my view had gotten a little out of hand. It is still too early to tell how relevant these various lists will be this year. The outcome of the budget discussions between Congress and the administration is unclear. I don't believe we should or need to increase the fiscal year 1998 defense budget this year. If Congress does decide to make adjustments to the fiscal year 1998 budget, I think we are much better off with a \$4.0 billion joint list than with four \$3.0 billion lists that have not had the benefit of a joint review.

I want to thank Secretary Cohen and General Shalikashvili for their cooperation in this effort.

EXHIBIT 1

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, March 18, 1997.

Hon. WILLIAM S. COHEN,
Secretary of Defense.

Gen. JOHN M. SHALIKASHVILI,
USA, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY COHEN AND GENERAL SHALIKASHVILI: At the request of the Committee, each of the Chiefs of the military services has provided the Committee with a list of their program priorities in the event that Congress decides to provide additional funding to the Defense Department for fiscal year 1998 above the President's budget request. I have enclosed a copy of each of these four lists.

I would appreciate your response to two issues concerning these lists which were raised during your testimony before the Committee on February 12, 1997.

First, please indicate which programs, if any, on these lists are programs for which funds are not included in the Department's current Future Years Defense Program.

Second, during the Committee's February 12 hearing, you requested that we look at the prioritization of these programs within the joint context. Accordingly, please indicate your views on the priority of the individual programs on these lists from the joint warfighting perspective. You should also indicate whether there are any programs not included on these lists that have a higher priority from the joint perspective.

I would appreciate your response to these questions by April 1, 1997. Thank you for your assistance in this important matter.

Sincerely,

CARL LEVIN,
Ranking Minority Member.

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE,
Washington, DC, April 10, 1997.

Hon. CARL LEVIN,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CARL: I welcomed your letter of March 18, 1997, to General Shali and me because it gives me the opportunity to provide my perspective on the Service unfunded priority lists. While the lists provide useful